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Montana Pupil Transportation
News and Updates
June 2002



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A Monthly Newsletter Published by Pupil Transportation, School Budgeting and Accounting Division

NEW STANDARDS DISTRIBUTED

The *Standards for School Buses in Montana 2002* are being distributed in June.

Copies of the new standards were distributed to attendees at the MAPT Conference in Belgrade last week. Maxine and members of the Pupil Transportation Advisory Panel answered questions and provided information about the new training requirements addressed in the standards. If you were unable to attend the conference, the new standards are also being mailed on June 25th. Please place the standards under Tab "F" in your *Montana Pupil Transportation Handbook* that was distributed last year.

New Operations Standards require that school districts work to promote school bus safety and efficiencies, including planning and conducting a school bus driver-training program. Drivers are required to receive at least 10 hours of continuing education annually. The training program shall be designed and implemented at the district level. A continuing education program for school bus drivers shall include, but is not limited to: (a) pre- and post-trip inspection training; (b) passenger boarding and debarking procedures; (c) driving skills; (d) defensive driving; (e) railroad safety; (f) passenger management; (g) safety and emergency procedures; and (h) special needs sensitivity and awareness.

Districts shall provide drivers an opportunity to participate in workshops, conferences and meetings where drivers can work with and learn from a group of their peers. Also, drivers shall receive drug and alcohol education as required in the Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991.

The question asked over and over again at the MAPT Conference was: "Do our subs have to have this training also?" The answer is **YES**. Sub drivers could potentially benefit the most from this training. Regular drivers drive every day. They are probably already getting the required 10 hours of annual training.

Another issue that came up at the conference was that drivers are often uncomfortable to have a special needs child on the bus because of the fear of what might happen while the child is in the driver's care. It is our responsibility as transportation

specialists to see that all children get to school safely. Sometimes lack of training heightens the fear. When drivers are included in the IEP process, when drivers are fully trained to deal with difficult circumstances, and are supported by administrators and supervisors, the fear is much less and the task is much easier. Please be aware of the need for driver training and inclusion in this area.

TRANSPORTATION PAYMENT GOES OUT IN JUNE

The transportation reimbursement advice is being mailed to districts on June 25, 2002. Please review the information carefully. We make every effort to eliminate errors but it is always a good idea to conduct a review. If there is a problem, please put it in writing and either email to mmougeot@state.mt.us or fax it to (406) 444-0509. I am taking a vacation the week of July 1-5. If you send me corrections, I can get started on them as soon as I return rather than returning phone calls and asking you to fax corrections to me at that time. Your help is very much appreciated.

TR-13 BUS INSPECTION FORMS ARE IN THE MAIL

The TR-13's have been revised to reflect the new bus standards. Preprinted forms are included in the June 25 mailing.

Since You Asked (Worth repeating)

We shortened our route during second semester. Now what should I do?

This is an easy one. The original route with 25 miles is already named Route #1, for example. Let's say that you operated Route #1 at that mileage for 51 days. When you amended the route, you sent me a new TR-1 showing 20 miles. This becomes Route #1 A. When you complete the TR-6, report Route #1 with 51 days and 25 miles. Write in Route #1 A for 39 days and 20 miles, and then submit the claim.

Where can I find the Transportation Spreadsheet for budgeting purposes?

Go to the new OPI Web Site at www.opi@state.mt.us. Choose <Pupil Transportation> from the programs and services drop down listing. You will find a link called <Transportation Excel Spreadsheet for Budgeting>. Please call me at 444-3096 if you have any questions.

Where can I find the new forms??

We have placed all of the new forms on our new transportation web site. On your browser, go to www.opi@state.mt.us then click on <programs and services>, then click on <Pupil Transportation>. You will find all of the forms there.

PROMPTLY RETURN TRAINING VIDEOS

Training Video News...

New training videos are now available from OPI. This is the way it works: Contact me, tell me the training date, a mailing address and who is responsible for the video training. I will prepare a packet for you including a return address label, a form that the responsible person will sign and return, and training information about the video, if appropriate. Once training has been completed, repackage the video, put all of the training information back into the box, and use the return label to mail it promptly to me at OPI. If you have any suggestions regarding training videos, please email me at mmougeot@state.mt.us or you can reach me by calling (406) 444-3096.

Newly purchased driver training videos include:

Evacuating a School Bus
Bus Evacuation for Special Ed Bus Drivers
Intervention Strategies for School Bus Drivers
Intervention Strategies for Special Ed Bus Drivers
Safe School Bus Crossing Procedures
Introduction to Special Ed Bus Driving

OPI video library also includes:

Necessary and Reasonable Force
Confidential Records
Children in Traffic
The Veteran Driver
The Safest Way Out

These videos count toward the 10-hour annual training required by the new standards. When drivers watch these videos and there is discussion time afterwards, the entire amount of time spent will count towards the new training requirement.

Don't forget to thank the bus drivers for the great job they did this year. Safety remains the top priority!!

The National Academy of Science Issues School Bus Safety Study

"School children are at greater risk traveling to school by private passenger vehicles, especially if a teen-age driver is involved, than in school buses, according to a new report. The study found that more than 800 school-age children are killed annually in motor vehicle crashes during normal school travel, weekday mornings and afternoons during school months, accounting for 14 percent of the 5,600 child deaths that occur annually on the nation's roadways. Of these only 2 percent are school bus related, while 74 percent occur in private passenger vehicles with the remainder pedestrian or bicycle accidents." For the entire story, go to www.stnonline.com. Look for the June 18, 2002 special edition.



IMPORTANT DATES

June 25, 2002 TR-13's (Bus Inspection Form) mailed to Districts

June 25, 2002 Preprinted TR-1's for 2002-2003 mailed to districts

June 25, 2002 Second Semester Transportation payment sent to Counties for distribution to school districts

June 25, 2002 TR-4 due to County

July 10, 2002 TR-4 Individual Transportation Contracts due to OPI

August Bus Inspections due to OPI before 1st semester begins

Update driver certificates, bus inspection forms, route information and contracts regularly.